DE GRUYTER MOUTON Applied Linguistics Review 2022; aop

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The mundanity of translanguaging and Aboriginal identity in Australia

https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2022-0064
Received June 3, 2022; accepted July 6, 2022; published online July 21, 2022

Abstract: Drawing on ethnographic interview analysis of Aboriginal participants in Australia, this study seeks to expand the critical discussions in Applied Linguistics by understanding the concept of translanguaging in relation to its "mundanity" (or ordinariness). Our data shows that rather than perceiving translanguaging as extraordinary, for Aboriginal speakers it is more likely to be considered normal, unremarkable, mundane, and as a long-existing phenomenon. The concept of the mundanity of translanguaging is thereby expanded through three main discussions in this article: 1) negotiating identity and resisting racism, where the Aboriginal speakers choose to translanguage using their full linguistic repertoires, but with appropriate communicative adjustments made for their interlocutor; 2) a display of respect towards their land, heritage and language; and 3) as an inherent and mundane everyday practice where they constantly negotiate between heritage languages, English, Kriol, and Aboriginal English varieties. The significance of this study lies in the normalisation of translanguaging as a mundane disinvention strategy, as this urges us to perceive linguistic separateness as a colonial ideological construct that is used to exhibit control over diverse peoples and to maintain uniformity and stability of nation-states.

Keywords: Aboriginal identity; Australia; mundanity; translanguaging

1 Introduction

This study examines the ways in which Aboriginal people in Western Australia engage in translanguaging as an ordinary or "mundane practice" (Pennycook and Otsuji 2019)

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to address the intersectionality of social, cultural, linguistic, economic and racial differences. It investigates the commonality and normativity of their core language experience within their everyday lives to interact, negotiate their identities in the predominantly homogeneous Westernised society, as well as to resist sociolinguistic practices, colonising ideologies and societal norms imposed by the mainstream society. We draw on the discussion of translanguaging practices of Aboriginal communities in Australia, where they use translanguaging as a normal everyday communicative practice (Lee 2018), a resistance strategy (Dovchin 2019) and a transgressive practice (Dovchin and Lee 2019), all of which are situated within a junction between local and transnational linguistic resources. We do this in order to investigate the mundanity of translanguaging practice and the dynamics between diverse language resources of Indigenous peoples in Western Australia – Aboriginal people. "Aboriginal people" is the term most often used by participants, but also the one acknowledged in the literature (Oliver and Exell 2020). Similar scholarly contributions, which investigated sociolinguistic practices of Indigenous societies in Africa and South America, illustrate the mundanity of communicative practices which defy mainstream practices and imposition of the extraordinariness of the Western society (Epps 2020; Lüpke 2017; Makoni and Pennycook 2005; Pennycook and Otsuji 2019). These practices thus draw on numerous named languages, but do not conform to monolingual ideologies and are not perceived by language users as extraordinary (Dovchin 2017). In addition to investigating translingual practices of Aboriginal people in Western Australia, this study will also look into the role that translanguaging has in Aboriginal communities, addressing three main research questions:

1. How and in what ways does translanguaging, as a mundane practice, help Aboriginal people overcome the difficulties of sociolinguistic stigmatisation and racism?
2. How and in what ways does translanguaging, help Aboriginal people negotiate their identities between tradition and globalisation?
3. What is the role of translanguaging in Aboriginal communities?

Exploring the relatively under-researched context of Aboriginal people and ways in which they negotiate their linguistic resources together with their past and present is of a great practical and scholarly importance, as we do not only discover ways in which they navigate their everyday lives in the Western society, but also ways in which they build their identities and combat racism. Significance of this study lies in giving voice to the unheard, empowering the marginalised, as well as informing the academic discourse of the importance of exploring translanguaging as a mundane practice.

2 The mundanity of translanguaging

Although translanguaging, discussed in its many forms – translingual practice (Canagarajah 2013), metrolingualism (Pennycook and Otsuji 2015) and transglossia (Sultana et al. 2015), among many other terms – has (re-)emerged to show how monolingual ideologies, perpetuated by the homogeneous societies, prevent us from understanding the reality of linguistic practices of the globalised society, it still, in some ways, others "diversity, plurality, flexibility, individualism, and cosmopolitanism, while perpetuating color-blindness and racism" (Kubota 2016: 474). Garcia and Li (2014: 2) define translanguaging as

> an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has traditionally been the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages.

Translanguaging redefines language from that of a single construct to language as a fluid and flexible practice where we employ multiple resources, generated through our experiences in the environment, to make meaning (Canagarajah 2013). It represents an arising process of social endeavour which constructs the language through ways in which it is practised by people – that is, the "practice of *doing* language" (Lee 2018: 5). Translanguaging is "a multilingual, multisemiotic, multisensory, and multimodal resource that human beings use for thinking and for communicating thought" (Li 2018: 26). It mainly focuses on language users' aptitude and capacity to construct relevant linguistic and communicative meanings through the combination of available translingual "multimodality and multimodal semiotics as resources, including gestures, objects, visual cues, touch, tone, sounds and words" (Liu and Fang 2020: 3) to achieve their full communicative aims. Translanguaging resists traditional and conventional linguistic categorisations and language norms, but instead relies on the awareness of the discourse and language abilities of interlocutors in a certain context (Canagarajah 2013). It rejects the inherent superiority of normative language use and "native speakerism" and thus transgresses monolingual dominance. When Sultana (2014) refers to linguistic diversity, she directly associates it with different translanguaging resources, in which language users redefine the role of English and other languages in relation to their existing online social relationships, creatively transcending the meaning of English not only by merging it with their first language but also by integrating other multimodal texts drawing on both local and global media content. Translanguaging transcends both "individual languages" and words, thus involving "diverse semiotic resources and ecological affordances" (Canagarajah 2013: 6). In this reframing of

translanguaging, the focus is not so much on language systems, but the availability of diverse semiotic resources in a particular place, which Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) have elsewhere termed the spatial repertoires that people draw on as they engage in everyday social and work activities (Izadi 2020).

Even though the emerging scholarship slowly started diverting attention from the linguistic innovation, intellectual fetishism, and exoticisation of the different linguistic practice towards perceiving it as mundane, unremarkable, ordinary and as a long-existing phenomenon (Blommaert 2013; Dovchin 2018; Lee and Dovchin 2019; Pennycook and Otsuji 2015), there remains a need to investigate commonplace language practices of peripheral local language communities that have become mainstream in modern society (Silverstein 2015; Vaughan 2019). The term "mundanity," or the cluster of other terms that have been similarly used (everyday, ordinariness, unremarkable, etc.) has been employed by Pennycook and Otsuji (2019) to address the idea of social, cultural, sexual, economic, racial and other differences as the commonality of the core experience of human life. The notion of mundanity is, therefore, used to emphasise local contexts of everyday diversity, in which the everyday entanglements of language, people, places and objects are "not exotic or something that others have, but key to all experience" (Pennycook and Otsuji 2019: 175). At the same time, because a particular social and linguistic phenomenon exists, this does not mean that we necessarily have to single it out as extraordinary and unconventional for it to be a part of the theoretical discussion and real-life practice. By bringing "unreflexive ethnocentrism" to the global westernised sociolinguistics (May 2016: 12–13), we risk overlooking the everyday translanguaging in peripheral, particularly in Indigenous, settings, where it has served the purpose of sociolinguistic negotiation and empowerment for millennia. Therefore, translanguaging needs to be perceived as more than a practical theory of language; it is an empowering mundane practice through which language users deconstruct ideologically driven dichotomies between "the macro and the micro, the societal and the individual, and the social and the psychological through interaction" (Li 2018: 23).

Western society's lack of familiarisation with and acknowledgement of the diversity, in this case particularly with sociolinguistic practices different from their own, becomes one of the pressing issues of today. Despite living in a complex web of sociolinguistically mobile towns, regions, and neighbourhoods, and being connected by both physical and symbolic ties (Blommaert 2010), many still find it difficult to view the unfamiliar as an everyday and normal occurrence. Their ethno- and linguistic centrism urges them to view the other with wonder and curiosity while simultaneously being guarded against the "unknown" and "extraordinary" that is outside their immediate environment. This often leads to the prevalence of colonial social ideologies that prevent the mainstream society from looking into the present and, with respect to translanguaging, understanding it in terms of

flexibility, lack of boundaries, and even absurdity of native speakerism and linguistic purism. Hence, othering translanguaging becomes a basis for linguistic racism – a new form of racism based on the linguistic background and linguistic practice, but also ethno-racial and sociocultural backgrounds (Dovchin 2020; Tankosić and Dovchin 2021), discrimination, sociolinguistic inequalities, marginalisation, and ostracism of those belonging to the "Global South" (Dovchin 2019; Dryden et al. 2021; Kubota 2016; Piller 2016).

Makoni and Pennycook (2005) suggested a paradigm of *disinvention* as a way of combatting colonialist perspectives of traditional language boundaries. Disinvention contests "approaches to diversity, multilingualism and so forth, [which] all too often start with the enumerative strategy of counting languages and romanticizing a plurality based on these putative language counts" (Makoni and Pennycook 2005: 16). Hence, to accept or presume linguistic categories (English vs. Spanish) as well as traditional dichotomies (native vs. non-native speaker, prescription vs. description, etc.) is to perpetuate and give advantage to colonial ideologies of Western modernity (Lee 2018). Therefore, normalisation of translanguaging as a mundane disinvention strategy urges us to perceive linguistic separateness as a colonial ideological construct that is used to exhibit control over diverse peoples and to maintain uniformity and stability of nation-states (Makoni and Pennycook 2005). It simultaneously helps us notice and reveal culture-centrism – "the assumption (whether conscious or not) that characteristics of one's own culture are in fact characteristics of human nature [… and] that what is done within this culture is natural, whereas what others do differently requires a cultural explanation" (Grace 2002) – especially when it happens and affects societies categorised as the Global South.

3 Translanguaging in Aboriginal communities

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise about 4% of the entire population living in Western Australia. Western Australia is home to a range of different Aboriginal kinship groupings that have been in contact – either through marriage or travel – throughout history. For Aboriginal people, language represents an important cultural asset as their cultural values, beliefs, and stories have been passed on through rich oral tradition. There are many Aboriginal languages as well as creoles, with Kriol being the most often spoken one in the northern part of Australia (Harris 2007). Most Aboriginal people also speak a form of Aboriginal English, a dialect of English, which serves as the lingua franca between speakers from different language backgrounds, and is most often a home language of many Aboriginal children (Oliver and Exell 2020). Aboriginal English

has similar grammatical features to Standard Australian English, but does differ on various syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and phonological levels. Even communities, whose home language is one of the original 120 languages still spoken in Australia (there were initially 250 original languages), also engage in interaction using Aboriginal English, Kriol and their home language depending on their communicative audience. Such a natural way of moving between languages and employing multiple linguistic resources shows that translanguaging is a mundane and prevalent communicative practice where priority is not linguistic norms, but rather the sociolinguistic context and meaning-making. Translanguaging as an everyday practice allows them to negotiate their identities and to create an empowering discourse that helps them resist sociolinguistic inequalities and racism that they face in their lives.

Although traditional languages of Aboriginal people are ideologised, as well as inherently and eternally bounded to specific group and land (Merlan 1981) and by the traditional discourse (Vaughan, 2019), today Aboriginal speakers transgress the boundaries and often engage in interaction drawing from diverse linguistic resources. Even though translanguaging using different Aboriginal languages is often evaluated negatively and considered as a transgression of the "'patrilect' priority" (Vaughan 2019: 99), the reality of the everyday practice shows that the use of diverse linguistic resources through translanguaging is very much a routine practice. Young Aboriginal people, for instance, are often identified as bilingual and bidialectical as their linguistic repertoires come from Aboriginal English, Standard Australian English, Kriol as well as traditional languages, which presents an important aspect of their identity (Oliver and Exell 2020). Older Aboriginal people feel ownership of different original Aboriginal languages as they belong to some members of their family, therefore, they consistently engage in translanguaging to show that all language resources are important to them (Vaughan 2019). In other words, although translanguaging is commonly perceived as part of the framework which aims to erase the ties between language and identity, for Aboriginal people, translanguaging is actually an essential aspect of their identity. It helps them, as this study will show, negotiate and establish ties with non-Aboriginal Australians and become a part of the contemporary Australian society, but it also helps them to maintain traditional Aboriginal culture, values and beliefs. Through translanguaging, they are not only keeping pace with modernisation and globalisation, but are simultaneously preserving Aboriginal languages and their way of life. Translanguaging also serves the purpose of showing respect for the culture, land and languages of different Aboriginal communities.

While translanguaging helps Aboriginal people exist in two different worlds and negotiate their family connections with engagement in the mainstream society, it also serves as an empowering form of discourse and a resistance strategy

against discrimination and inequalities they face in their everyday lives. Inequality of Aboriginal people in Australia is evident in statistical information concerning unemployment, lack of education, economic income, housing conditions and social status – overall, they are placed at some of the lowest levels in the social and professional hierarchy (Habibis and Walter 2015), even below incoming migrants from peripheralised countries. Sociologist Rose's (1996) argument, based on Foucault's idea about ways in which population can be controlled through disciplinary practices, and which describes how political power can be used to control public policy, can help us in understanding the position of Aboriginal people. He shows that the discourse of right and duties creates others as morally deficient individuals, which is perhaps why Aboriginal people are often stigmatised because of their "black bodies, different culture, and history of resistance to white authority" (Habibis and Walter 2015: 247). Furthermore, their complex and flexible linguistic practices, mean they do not directly conform to the neoliberal capital of contemporary Australian society. This means that regardless of the linguistic resources that they choose – be it Standard Australian English or Aboriginal English – they are still subjected to linguistic racism (Oliver and Exell 2020). Therefore, in this study we explore the potential that acknowledgement of translanguaging may have as an everyday and mundane practice, one that is an inherent part of Aboriginal identity and the world they live in today. Additionally, we explore how this may help them overcome difficulties of sociolinguistic stigmatisation and racism and, in this way, act as an empowering discourse.

4 Research method

This research is qualitative in design. In-depth, one-on-one interviews were used as the main source of data. The participants for the study were selected by way of convenience sampling (Lavrakas 2008). All were known to the researcher involved in each of the interviews.

4.1 Participants

The participants were six Aboriginal people, one was interviewed by Author 2, four by Author 4 and a further person by a research assistant (who was known to him). The participants' ages ranged from 27 to 42 years. Five of the participants are male and one female. This gender profile is related to who on the research team was available to recruit participants (mostly Author 4 – a male) and the social protocols around interaction between the different genders (i.e. in many Aboriginal

communities that abide to traditional mores, it is not appropriate for unrelated people not of the same gender to be alone together, such as for an interview). At the time of the interviews, two participants were living in Perth – the capital city of Western Australia (WA) – although they grew up elsewhere (i.e. the Kimberly region, the most northerly region in WA), and the other four were living in the northern Pilbara region of WA (just above the 26 parallel); however, only one of these came from that region, while the other three have connections to communities in the Kimberly region. They come from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and while all speak both Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English, some also speak Kriol, two have proficiency in their traditional language(s), one was learning her traditional home language, and another had familiarity with some of the lexicon in his language. In Table 1 we provide an outline of the key characteristics of the participants. Note: Aboriginal people culturally identify according to language group, even when they might not speak that language. For example, Aboriginal people of the south-west of Western Australia identify as being Noongar, even though they may not speak that language.

Despite being non-Aboriginal himself, all of the participants were well known to Author 4 and this strong and established relationship, which is key to Australian Aboriginal research, enabled collection of the rich interview data. The reason for these relationships was because of the work he had done in schools, including in the Goldfields, Pilbara and Kimberly regions, working for the Clontarf Foundation which provides mentorship for Aboriginal adolescents in schools.

Table 1: Background details of participants.

Name	Age	Gender	Residential location	Cultural/linguistic background	Languages spoken
Jarrah	27	Male	Perth	Bunbuba & Jaru	Speaks SAE and AE, some Kriol with an understanding of traditional language (shown left) lexicon
Thomas	38	Male	Pilbara but grew up in Perth	Kija	Went to school with Noongar Aboriginal people, first language SAE, but can communicate in AE
Nullah	42	Male	Pilbara	Jaru	Jaru, Kriol, AE, SAE but with a quite heavy accent
Waru	32	Male	Pilbara	Nylamala	Nyangumarta, Kriol, AE, SAE
Kira	40	Female	Pilbara	Yawuru and Nyulnyul	SAE and AE, and currently learning languages (shown left)
Henry	27	Male	Barwell	Yamaji Nanda and Noongar Yued	SAE, AE, Kriol

4.2 Procedure

For the data to be collected, the first step was for ethical permission to be granted from Curtin University. Next, volunteer participants were recruited. Then, following the usual ethical procedures, permission was gained from each of the participants. At this time, they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, interviews were undertaken in ways conforming to the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) statements about undertaking.

Indigenous research. The researchers followed an interview schedule, but did so in such a way to reflect the informal conversational style of Aboriginal people, namely through "yarning." As such, although the questions from the schedule were asked, additional questions were also included and the order varied according to yarning protocols. These "yarns" were recorded and then transcribed. In our results we have focused on *tell(ing) their story* because it is each participant's story rather than ours to tell. We also did this acknowledging that only Aboriginal people should be entitled to define (their) Aboriginal identity (Langford 1983). It is also why we used the participants' voices wherever possible in our findings.

4.3 Data analysis

We analysed and interpreted data "productively, contextually and discursively" (Pennycook 2007: 53) by following Braun and Clarke's (2013) set of seven steps of data analysis: transcribing the interview data, familiarising ourselves with data, coding the data, finding the most common themes, reviewing these themes, defining them and finalising our analysis in writing. Themes that we wrote about in this study were the ones discussed by all our participants, which is why they were selected as representative of the participants' true reality. In our analysis, we tried to understand each interview as a whole unit to prevent presenting parts of our participants' stories out of context.

5 Findings and discussion

5.1 The mundanity of translanguaging: negotiating identity and resisting racism

Henry is an Aboriginal man – Yamaji, Nanda and Noongar – who grew up in a small remote Aboriginal community in the Mid-West region of Western Australia.

His home language is what he calls "Broken English," which represents a mixture of Aboriginal words and the English language – what we know to be Aboriginal English and Kriol. He got his high school certificate from a prestigious private boarding school in Perth and later gained a university degree. Henry explains how his everyday interactions are mostly characterised by translanguaging between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English in order to negotiate his identity. He adapts his communicative repertoires depending on who his communicative audience is. Henry described how, initially, translanguaging was a point of integration and adaptation into two different, but in-contact societies; as he says in his interview "I was just trying to be a number, I guess, just trying to fit in the best way, the easiest way I felt, the most comfortable way." Later in his life, however, he actively participated in creating translingual space as a point of resistance, traditional identity performance and his way of combatting subtle and more direct forms of everyday racism. In Extract 1, Henry explains how he has been translanguaging to make his interactants feel comfortable. He draws linguistic resources from multiple repertoires as a way of establishing initial connection and contact with a new person, a process of which differs based on his communicative partner's sociolinguistic background.

Extract 1

1.	**Researcher**	So give me some examples of when you use or, you know, differentiate using Standard English to, for example, Kriol.
2.	**Henry**	Um, when I make, especially in my work, when I meet someone that's high up in the ranks, I guess, um, just, I don't know. I guess I think of it as steps. So, if I may see this CEO, executive guy talk the Standard Australian English, and as this the conversation progresses, I guess, I have to meet him a couple more times, that's when I'll just slowly introduce it and. Yeah. Because I guess I just hate to, I don't know, (pause) I don't know I wouldn't care actually about that. I was thinking about making someone feel like really uncomfortable about me then then I probably try to educate them and help them about it. But I guess it's just steps.***[1]

1 Omitted text because utterance was unclear or because it revealed personal information.

3.	**Researcher**	So say it's the first time you met someone, would you be talking normally like Kriol, or would you try and talk with Standard Australian English to someone you never met before, who isn't a major connection to any of your mates?
4.	**Henry**	Umm, maybe, maybe a bit of both, because I don't know, I guess it kind of just depends on circumstances and who that person is. Umm, if I meet another blackfella for the first time, I'd have a conversation, I'd be like "hey (***); how is it going…." Or if it was another white person, it'd be "hey mate," but then, in saying that again, I would take those steps like I said before, where I'll say start introducing, especially if that's a non- non-indigenous person?
5.	**Researcher**	But do you reckon there is a difference between, say, meeting a Gardia ("white fella") bloke for the first time as opposed to meeting a black fella?
6.	**Henry**	Yeah, there's a difference. *** Umm. I don't know. Just the, you know, this is this is that in me, the young me trying to make that other person feel comfortable. With that white person, that I, umm, just approach with the Standard English, Australian English. Umm, I'll always try to, umm, I don't know, dumb it down, I guess, to say this language (***) is just Aussie slang.

Henry's translanguaging, as shown in Extract 1, which serves the purpose of integration in society and represents a need for acceptance, developed at an early age when he experienced direct racism at a school camp where he was the only racially diverse child. Being called different names, and directly confronted for being different in appearance, has led him to adapt his linguistic repertoires based on the context of the interaction and according to the person with whom he is speaking. Today, he uses his translanguaging ability "to shuttle between languages, treating diverse languages that form [his] repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah 2011: 401), rather than distinct and ideologically driven codes. Using Standard Australian English as his initial response to a non-Aboriginal person (part 6), while gradually starting to translanguage by drawing linguistic resources from Aboriginal English (parts 2, 4), is his way of negotiating the tradition and the mainstream – cherishing and preserving his Aboriginal background, while simultaneously being a part of the mainstream Australian

society. It is also his way of maintaining a comfortable interaction for his interlocutor, where we still get a glimpse into the consequences of the colonising ideologies resulting in his feeling of inferiority. Although Aboriginal people are used to translanguaging in ways inherently connected to their cultural heritage and ways of life (Simpson and Wigglesworth 2019) as they draw from original linguistic repertoires to interact with members from diverse Aboriginal communities, translanguaging with a non-Aboriginal person also initiates their gradual inclusivity in an ongoing process of sociolinguistic globalisation. It becomes a natural, mundane, and everyday practice where negotiation of meaning and social hierarchies becomes a norm.

Choosing to speak “a bit of both” (part 4) – referring to Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English – shows Henry’s need to keep close ties to his family and his Aboriginal community, but it simultaneously demonstrates that he is a young modern man who understands the price of having today’s sociolinguistic capital, particularly in the Westernised society. Henry talks in his interview of the shame he felt when he first spoke Aboriginal English in front of his non-Aboriginal Australian peers in high school. Translanguaging for Henry, hence, is a mundane practice which is his way of crossing the boundaries (Dovchin 2019) and exercising his identities in the sociocultural, linguistic, and political centre, where language is often used for mainstreaming the different to achieve homogeneity (Blommaert 2010). Therefore, to make a positive change in the present society and to help new generations of young people just like him, Henry now does not put boundaries between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English as he did in high school, but he chooses to translanguage. The importance of his translingual practice lies in the fact that he does not feel ashamed of his linguistic repertoire anymore, as he said he did when he was in high school. However, it is still the case that he often “dumbs down” (part 6) some Aboriginal words to make them closer to the mainstream society and tries to make it pass as “Aussie slang” (part 6).

Although Henry has found a way to reconcile his language background within mainstream society, the consequences of colonising ideologies and everyday racism that Aboriginal people have experienced, as reported by interviewees in this study, are still taking a toll on their social and linguistic practices. Translanguaging, as an inherent and culturally appropriate practice within Aboriginal society, has been suppressed because of mainstream ideologies. As a consequence, they have consciously assumed fixed linguistic repertoires to try to avoid linguistic racism and present themselves as “smart,” “knowledgeable” and “worthy of attention” – as described by another of participants – “I felt kind of a shame for talking that Aboriginal English” (Interview with Henry); “because I didn’t know Australian

English, I was very shy and didn't talk to anyone, I had to learn Australian English when I went away for year 10, and I was very quiet" (Interview with Nullah). Others described how they carefully use Standard Australian English to communicate, especially in contexts where a deviation from the norm results in fear of being created an outcast. For example, when Henry was asked whether he would feel confident in using all of his language repertoire (e.g. Kriol and Aboriginal English along with Standard Australian English), he indicated that when he was in high school he would not – "I think bullying would have definitely been, they would have had a little bit more, I don't know, excuses to bully me." Standard Australian English, in his case, was used as a means of trying to fit in and avoid any sort of conflict. This aligns with previous research showing that because of Aboriginal peoples' experiences with inequalities and discrimination throughout "colonial and neocolonial past and present" based on their "Aboriginality" (Eades 2013: 13), especially when young, as in Henry's case, they have learnt to deny their Aboriginal (linguistic) identity and heritage. Nevertheless, from Henry's story, we can see how he has now chosen to translanguage using his complete linguistic repertoire with only minor adjustments made for his interlocutor. This has boosted his confidence and by acknowledging his identity and heritage culture, has empowered him, and helped him resist sociolinguistic norms imposed by the mainstream society. Taking such translanguaging steps, using traditional language, Kriol and English as an everyday practice, has helped Henry negotiate his globalised and traditional identity and overcome fear of stigmatisation.

5.2 The mundanity of translanguaging: a display of respect

Despite being a historically oppressive force for Aboriginal people, English, or a form of it (Aboriginal English) has also become localised and now represents a "production of locality" (Blommaert 2010: 27). It is worth noting that Aboriginal English is an umbrella term for multiple varieties and dialects spoken by Aboriginal people in Australia (Eades 2013), which in itself represents a flexible linguistic repertoire, as its form is dependent on communicative contexts. In this way, it also encourages inherent translanguaging. Translanguaging is not uncommon for Aboriginal people because of social connections and marriage to people from other parts of Australia, with different *dreamings*[2] and possibly languages – they were mostly familiar with more than two linguistic repertoires (Simpson and

2 *Dreamtime* or *Dreaming* for Aboriginal people in Australia represents the time when the Ancestral Spirits inhabited the land and created life as well as main geographic sites. It explains the origin of the universe in the Aboriginal culture.

Wigglesworth 2019). For example, Nullah, an Aboriginal man whose mother's roots are from the Jaru country, explains how:

> All of Australia has the Language map; it's like looking at Europe; they're all countries within a country; all different practices and protocols. Everyone thinks Aboriginals is all one way, but it's really not. People wouldn't think two countries in Europe have the same culture, but they paint Aboriginal languages with the same brush.

What he wants to show with his comparison of Europe and Aboriginal Australia is simultaneously the diversity, but also the contact between Aboriginal communities. Communities are not homogeneous, but rather interlaced with different Aboriginal backgrounds, cultures, and languages, which are in the constant interplay through mobilities. This explains in part how translanguaging is inherent in such communities because it has evolved in the exchange and negotiation of different Aboriginal cultures, languages, and ways of life, but also English as the new language of the mainstream Australian society. For Aboriginal communities, identity and belonging are fundamental and are also a product of their familiarity and knowledge about their heritage line and history. As Waru, an Aboriginal man from the Nyamal language group, explains, identity and belonging come from knowing where you are from and where your grandparents and their parents are from. However, it is important to emphasise that identity comes from a complex web of diverse sociolinguistic practices and yet at the same time is part of the mundanity of translanguaging amongst Aboriginal people.

Negotiation of identity and language through translanguaging is further explained by Henry in Extract 2, as he describes his linguistic response when meeting an Aboriginal person for the first time. He explains how he uses Aboriginal English ("who's your mob?") to form connections, to build relationships, and make the interlocutor comfortable.

Extract 2

1.	**Researcher**	And in introducing yourself to a new black fellow for the first time what's the first couple of questions you'd ask them you reckon?
2.	**Henry**	What's the name, where're you from, who's your mob?
3.	**Researcher**	Yeah. And what's the … what's the significance in all those questions?

4.	**Henry**	Them questions are like the ID checks for Aboriginal people because you get the last names and you find a connection there, because all Aboriginal people, most of us, we all, you know, we know our family and their last names, or if you can't find a connection there, you ask what area they're from, what town, what country, where, they might be from, you know, over east they might be Mario or Koori. And it's to find those connections and always know people. I know a lot of people, especially a lot of Aboriginal people from all different areas, and you find a connection, and then once you found it, that little link and then it just becomes a whole new level of comfortability and you just feel so comfortable that you can have a proper conversation and then talk about that person and you feel a little connection and then it makes the whole conversation just ease. It's just real, it's really funny how kind of easy it is for Aboriginal people to have a conversation, if you find those connections. And I guess it's, I guess, it's kind of the beauty of, beauty of being that connected to yourself and your people and your family, that you can do that. You can meet anyone, another Aboriginal person, and somehow some way you find a connection. Yes, that's … that's the main questions and make on a basis beyond that and then me, because I have a lot of friends, a lot of blackfella friends from all different areas, and I like to, I don't know, use my Aboriginal English to kind of, specific to that person or that region, just try to make them feel more comfortable.
5.	**Researcher**	So you wouldn't talk with your own Kriol, for example?
6.	**Henry**	Yeah, I would. But I also mix it up.

Contact between Aboriginal communities from different parts of Australia with different language repertoires and cultures has never been unusual for Aboriginal people. Knowledge of different linguistic repertoires was also normalised with the convention that it was considered respectful to speak in the "language of the land when on that land" (Simpson and Wigglesworth 2019: 70). For example, Gaby (2006: 14) writes

how in Cape York, Queensland, "monolingual conversations in Pormpuraaw are vanishingly rare, with most conversations involving between two and four languages." Translanguaging is, in that sense, connected to their heritage, their respect for diversity and different communities. As Henry shows, it is also their way of forming a connection and developing relationships. Henry speaks of that connection that starts developing with understanding where another person is from and who their "mob" is (parts 2, 4). He believes that after that small link is found, the conversation becomes more comfortable, as he becomes aware of the cultural heritage, but also of the linguistic repertoire of that person, and he begins to translanguage drawing resources from that repertoire (part 4). Such ease of communication builds upon the comfort and naturalness of translanguaging. Therefore, Henry's translanguaging with an Aboriginal man in Extract 2 is based on politeness and respect, but it is especially about making connections. He describes how communication between Aboriginal people is easy when the connection is made (part 4), and also how translanguaging is an inherent part of this. In this way we can see how everyday translingual practice is the Australian Aboriginal way of forming bonds, as well as being connected to families and their people.

From Henry's story, we can understand that exposure to multiple linguistic resources through contact with other Aboriginal people from different parts of Australia enriches one's linguistic repertoire, where the distinction between distinct codes becomes difficult, if not impossible. Similarly, Vaughan (2019: 99) explains how language practices in Arnhem Land, a largely Indigenous region on Australia's north-central coast, are "fundamentally characterized by diversity, flexibility, fluidity, and the depth and nuance of linguistic repertoires."

While translanguaging is inherent and natural for Aboriginal communities, it is also strategic, particularly in classroom contexts. Kira, a Yawuru and Nyulnyul Aboriginal woman, explains how she uses translanguaging in her work with high school students:

> Working with students here we compare language groups, so it's my way of building my relationships with those I work with as well. When we share our languages, I feel like it's a special connection to them and they show me respect. I'm actually blown away by them because some of them actually know more than one language group, and to me that's pretty special. I'm always hungry for them to teach me as well, so it means a lot to me.

Kira's explanation shows us how Aboriginal communities' land, heritage and language are of great value. They simultaneously represent their connection to their own group of people and demonstrate respect for those of different sociolinguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, communication is not based on finding the mutual linguistic code, but rather translanguaging is used to draw diverse linguistic resources from the students to form a connection and show respect towards

one another. Interestingly, being aware of their linguistic diversity helps them find it mundane and normal – “I’m speaking in English, but also I’m adding Aboriginal words as I speak” (Interview with Henry).

5.3 Translanguaging as a mundane everyday practice

The linguistic repertoire of our participants shows both the complexity of the sociolinguistic identity of Aboriginal people as it represents a web of diverse linguistic resources, traditions, cultures, and ways of life, but also the mundanity of it. That is, their translingual identity has become developed through translanguaging in their everyday lives. The negotiation between heritage languages, English, Kriol and Aboriginal English varieties has become a constant practice in various social settings. This is illustrated in Waru’s story, as Extract 3 shows:

Extract 3

1. **Waru** It’s funny, because I grew speaking Nyangumarta, it’s pretty much the language group next door to us. So when you leave De Grey going towards Bidgydanga, you’ll see a sign saying you’re entering Nyangumarta land, and right next to is Karajarri, and those two are very similar languages, and what happens was when all the language groups got pushed into Port Hedland, everyone spoke different languages and they thought how are we going to communicate with each other and because there was a lot of Nyangumarta people here sent from the missions to work, it was sort of the majority, and it’s also very easy to pick up, as opposed to Nyalmal, and when I went to primary school here, I was taught Nyangumarta language. So, my grandmother she would teach Nyangumarta language, so while we were learning that at school, we would learn others on the side. But as you would grow up, you would notice your family would be speaking four or five different languages and you would learn a bit of language here and there. So, if you go to Roebourne, which is only 2 h away, it’s a totally different language, totally different lore, it’s almost like a totally different culture. But you can pick up that language, because you visit those places, hang around those people, and most of the time you are related to them. So, over the years you pick up four or five different languages, but English is the primary language because that’s the society we live in.

Waru's sociolinguistic background is far from the ideologies that mainstream Australian society strives for – "politicized identities," "ethnolinguistic nationalism" and "national chauvinism" (Blommaert 2010: 3). Rather it represents what Blommaert (2010: 1) would refer to as "sociolinguistics of mobile resources, framed in terms of trans-contextual networks, flows and movements." Waru's linguistic repertoire and identity are "neither code-based nor rule-based but, rather, constantly evolving and dynamic," and they become a product of "an ethnographic and, at times, asymmetrical engagement in social contexts" (Makoni 2013: 90). His engagement with different linguistic resources and exposure to diverse Aboriginal land, culture, and ways of life while growing up built and expanded his linguistic repertoire where language boundaries ceased to exist, and translanguaging became normality. In contrast to non-Aboriginal Australian society, which discriminates against those whose linguistic repertoires differ from Standard Australian English because of "barriers in communication" (Tankosić and Dovchin 2021), Aboriginal communities find the exposure to diverse linguistic resources mundane. Their family members speak several languages and there are rarely barriers in communication as they move fluidly between their various languages/dialects. In this way, translanguaging is not extraordinary, but rather the "norm."

As is the case in many post-colonial societies such as Africa and South America, as well as in multilingual continents such as Europe and countries such as India, language contact is inevitable. Sociolinguistic mobility of today's society in general looks very similar to Waru's portrayal of Aboriginal sociolinguistic exchange. Exposure to different language resources does not necessarily only come from family and relatives, but also occurs in educational settings. All our participants experienced schooling in a language different from their home language(s). As a consequence of this and their everyday translanguaging practice, they also developed translingual identities (Tankosić 2020). Waru explains it this way:

> We learned English and Nyangumarta at the same time, because my grandmothers all spoke Nyangumarta at home, and a lot of times when we communicated it would be a mix of Nyangumarta and English, and there was a lot of Kriol involved.

Overall, cherishing Aboriginal heritage and preserving traditional identity while simultaneously participating in the society in which English is the required capital, is the way Aboriginal communities negotiate sociolinguistic exchange, combat disparities and perform as equal members of the society.

6 Conclusion

Drawing on ethnographic interview analysis of Aboriginal participants in Australia, this study seeks to expand the critical discussions in Applied Linguistics by understanding the concept of translanguaging in relation to its "mundanity." Translanguaging, discussed in its many forms, shows how monolingual ideologies prevent us from understanding the reality of linguistic practices of the globalised society. It "others" diversity, plurality and flexibility. Our data shows that rather than perceiving translanguaging as extraordinary, for Aboriginal speakers it is more likely to be considered as mundane and a long-existing phenomenon. The concept of the mundanity of translanguaging is thereby expanded through three main discussions in this article: 1) negotiating identity and resisting racism, 2) a display of respect, and 3) as an inherent and normal everyday practice.

First, we argue that the mundanity of translanguaging can be understood through negotiating identity and resisting racism, where the Aboriginal speakers choose to translanguage using their full linguistic repertoires, but with appropriate communicative adjustments made for their interlocutor. By supporting their cultural identity, this boosts their confidence and helps them resist sociolinguistic norms imposed by the mainstream society. Taking small steps and introducing translanguaging using traditional language repertoires, Kriol and English as an everyday practice, allows them to negotiate their globalised and traditional identity, fight the fear and resist the stigma and racism.

Second, we note that the mundanity of translanguaging can be embedded within a display and show of respect of Aboriginal speakers towards their land, heritage and language. It simultaneously represents their connection to their own group of people, but also demonstrates respect for those of a different sociolinguistic background. Communication is not based on finding the mutual linguistic code, but on translanguaging drawing diverse linguistic resources to form a connection and show respect towards one another. Furthermore, they find it mundane and normal to enrich their linguistic repertoires with diverse linguistic resources such as using their own traditional languages and that of other Aboriginal groups as way to explicitly acknowledge the value of and respect for tradition and diverse Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

Lastly, the mundanity of translanguaging in the everyday lives of Aboriginal people in Australia can be understood as their inherent and normal everyday practice where they constantly negotiate between heritage languages, English, Kriol and Aboriginal English varieties. It is the way they negotiate the linguistic exchange. It is also how they show that they value their Aboriginal heritage and their desire to preserve their traditional identity. At the same time, it shows that

they are equal members of the society in which English is the required capital for social and professional success.

We would like to finish this article by emphasising that translanguaging is as natural as it is ordinary and mundane, and that Aboriginal speakers mix, mesh and mingle diverse resources from their repertoires to achieve meaningful interactions. However, from an educational perspective there is a pressing need to integrate and accept the translanguaging of Aboriginal youth in classrooms, rather than the current situation that occurs in some schools where students are asked to "leave their language at the gate" (see Oliver et al. 2021). We need to ensure that we build on all students' linguistic repertoires to make pedagogy comprehensible. This will eventually allow students to bridge their understanding, doing so in ways that enhance, rather than diminish their linguistic repertoires. Furthermore, identity, including language background, is vital for all Aboriginal people. Being translingual is an important aspect of their identity and, therefore, we need to ensure supportive attitude towards translingual practices in the classroom. Such a positive view allows for positive identity creation because it gives due recognition to the linguistic and cultural background of not only Aboriginal, but all students coming from diverse backgrounds. Lastly, and most importantly of all, we need to understand that for students to be successful at school, they need to feel good about who they are. To achieve that, their ways of "being" and "doing" need to be recognised and respected.

Acknowledgements: First of all, we wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we live on, the Whadjuk (Perth region) people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We want to thank our research participants for agreeing to participate in our research. We thank the anonymous reviewers and the Editor-in-Chief Professor Li Wei and the Guest Editor of this Special Issue Fan Fang for their constructive feedback, which contributed significantly to the final version of this article.

Research Funding: This research was funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) (grant number DE180100118) and by Curtin University of Technology (AU) CIPRS and Research Stipend Scholarship (RES-58667).

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